

## A Brief Description of the EMS / Medic One Tiered System

The **Emergency Medical Services (EMS) / Medic One system** provides an internationally regarded regional service to the citizens of Seattle and King County, responding in an area of 2,134 square miles and serving a population of more than 1.7 million. The EMS/Medic One system operates in a coordinated partnership between King County, various cities, fire districts, private ambulance companies, local area hospitals, and others involved in providing high quality pre-hospital medical care. The EMS response system is tiered to ensure that 9-1-1 calls receive medical care by the most appropriate care provider.

There are five **major components** in the regional tiered EMS/Medic One system, and they are described below:

- **Universal Access:** Patient or bystander accesses the EMS system by calling 9-1-1 for medical assistance.
- **Dispatcher Triage:** Calls to 9-1-1 are received and triaged by trained professional dispatchers in six dispatch centers throughout King County. A majority of dispatch centers use the Criteria Based Dispatch (CBD) Guidelines to provide uniform triaging to callers.
- **Basic Life Support (BLS) services:** BLS personnel provide the first level of response to most calls and are staffed by firefighters trained as Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). BLS units arrive at the scene in an average of six minutes.
- **Advanced Life Support (ALS) services:** ALS services are provided by six paramedic agencies responding to patients with more critical or life-threatening injuries and illnesses. Paramedics respond to about 30% of all EMS responses.
- **Transport to Hospitals:** Some patients require additional medical care and are transported to hospitals for further attention.

